

APPLICATION FOR LANDMARK OR LANDMARK DISTRICT DESIGNATION  
ADDENDUM TO PETITION TO AMEND THE ZONING ORDINANCE  
LINCOLN, NEBRASKA

1. NAME

Historic  
and/or Common  
NeHBS Site

St. Elizabeth Hospital Nurses Home  
Trabert Hall  
LC13:C05-150

2. LOCATION

Address

2202 S. 11<sup>th</sup> Street, Lincoln, NE 68502

3. CLASSIFICATION

Proposed Designation

Category

☐ Landmark District  
☒ Landmark

☐ district  
☒ building(s)  
☐ structure

☐ site  
☐ object

Present Use

☐ agriculture  
☐ commercial  
☐ educational  
☐ entertainment  
☒ government

☐ industrial  
☐ military  
☐ museum  
☐ park  
☐ private residence

☐ religious  
☐ scientific  
☐ transportat'n  
☒ other (Vacant)

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

Name  
Address

Lancaster County  
555 S. 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Lincoln, NE 68508

5. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Legal Description

Saint Francis 1<sup>st</sup> Addition, Lot 3, Lincoln, Lancaster County, NE

Property ID Number

10-35-437-003-000

Number of Acres or Square Feet: 105201 Sq. ft., more or less

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

Title Historic and Architectural Survey of Lincoln

Date on-going ☐ State ☐ County ☒ Local

Is proposed Landmark or Landmark District listed in the National Register?

   yes, date listed

  x   no

7. DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY

Condition

   excellent

   deteriorated

   unaltered

  x   original site

   good

   ruins

  x   altered (rear wing,    moved date  
1960)

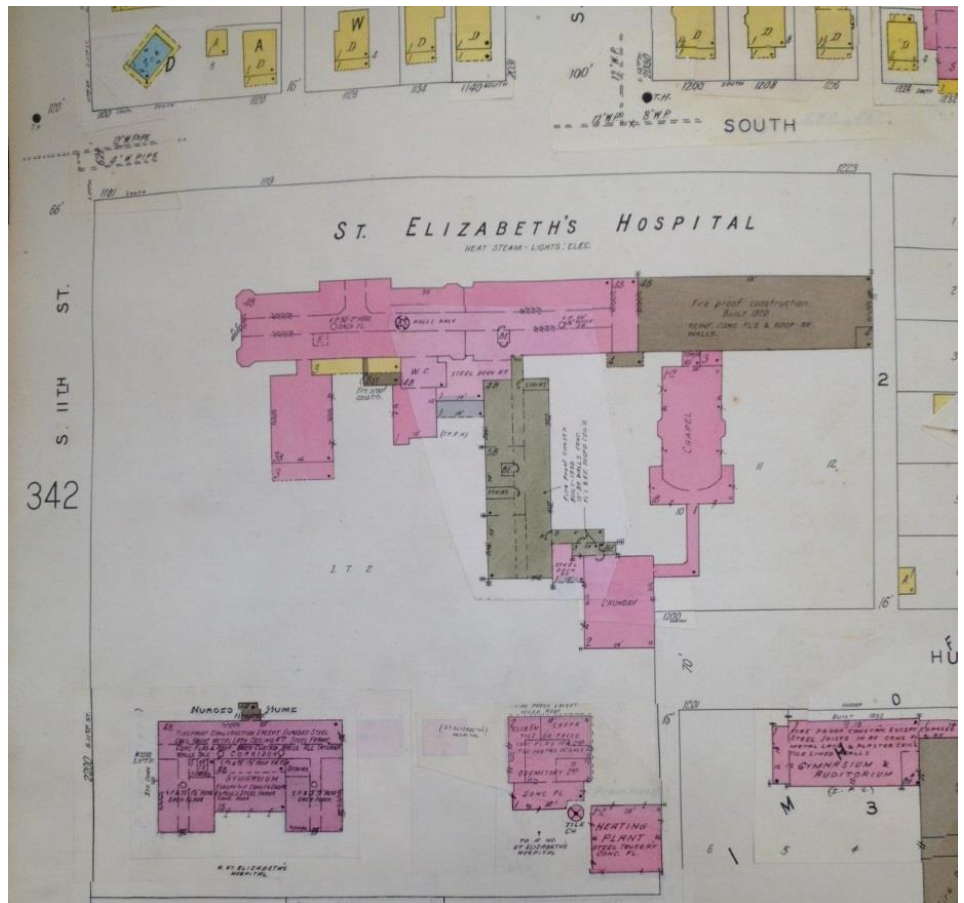
  X   fair

   unexposed

**DESCRIPTION:**

Trabert Hall, the former Saint Elizabeth Hospital Nurses Home, is a five story red-brick and concrete structure located approximately 350 feet south of South Street, southeast of Lancaster Rehabilitation Center (formerly Lancaster Manor). The floor plan of the original Nurses Home measures about 130 feet east-west and 75 feet north-south, in the shape of an inverted "U."

The parking lot between Trabert Hall and South Street was formerly the location of Saint Elizabeth Hospital and the Nurses Home was located to the rear of that campus. Originally the Nurses Home was connected to the main hospital buildings by a tunnel/corridor that extended over 300 feet.



*Sanborn Map Co. image of St. Elizabeth Hospital campus, updated to 1956. The Nurses Home/Trabert Hall is at lower left.*

The ground floor of Trabert Hall is clad in limestone, topped with four brick stories with limestone trim. The main, symmetrical north façade is organized in five main bays framed by brick pilasters, which are also expressed in the limestone base and top. Central on the façade is a projecting entrance pavilion



*View of the Nurses Home/Trabert Hall from northwest.*

flanked by projecting pavilions at each corner. The pavilions are capped with carved limestone and gothic finials, while the recessed bays linking the pavilions are topped with plain limestone bands. The brick walls are laid in common bond, with one header course to each six stretcher courses.



The projecting entrance vestibule at the center of the north façade is limestone and has a corner date stone inscribed 1928 west of the center entrance.

Secondary entrances on the east and west facades are sheltered by metal-clad vestibules with crenelated tops.

The east side also offers a ramp down to the basement level, screened by a brick wall.

A one-story gymnasium between the south wings was part of the original plans, with a stage at the east end. A five-story, red brick wing was added to the east rear of the original building in 1960, extending that leg by about 70 feet.



*Vestibule at west entrance to Nurses Home/Trabert Hall.*



*Rear view (from south) of Trabert Hall.*

*Postcard view from South St. of St. Elizabeth Hospital, looking SE, ca. 1920*

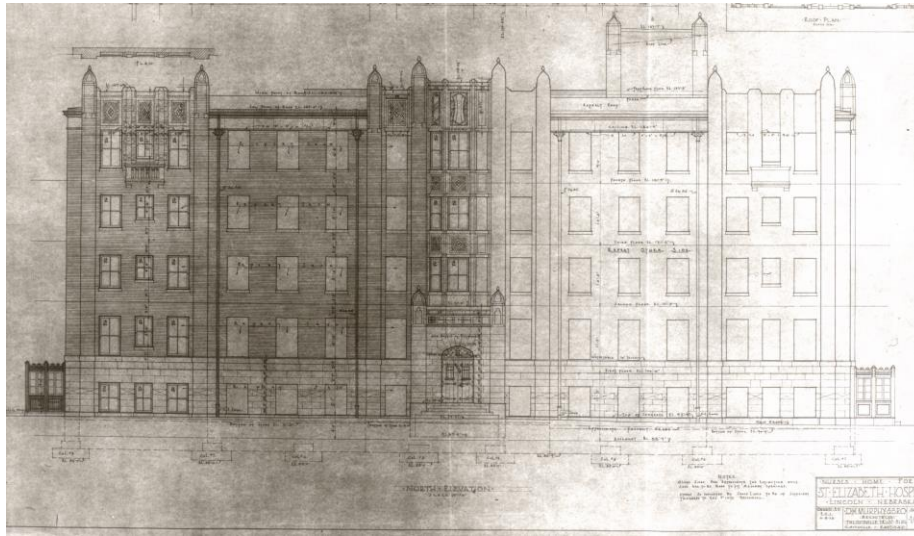
#### **HISTORY:**

Saint Elizabeth Hospital was founded in 1889 as Lincoln's first general hospital. Originally housed in a former residence, the hospital developed a major complex of red brick buildings stretching over four hundred feet along South Street by the 1920s. When the new Saint Elizabeth Medical Center was constructed on So. 70<sup>th</sup> Street in 1969, Lancaster County acquired the South St. campus and operated a nursing home, Lancaster Manor, in the old hospital until the mid-1980s. The complex was subsequently demolished in 1994 except for the chapel wing, now St. Francis Church, which had been designated as Lincoln Landmark in 1990.





The Nurses Home was added to the Saint Elizabeth campus in 1928, at an estimated cost of \$170,000.<sup>1</sup> W. J. Assenmacher of Lincoln was the contractor and D. X. Murphy & Brother of Louisville, Kentucky were the



architects. (The elevation outlines the penthouse of the elevator machinery, which is set well-back from the north façade and is inconspicuous from most vantage points.)

*D. X. Murphy & Brother, north elevation for Nurses Home*

The Murphy firm was established in 1853 by Irish immigrant Henry Whitestone in partnership with Isaiah Rogers. Dennis Xavier Murphy (1853-1933) assumed leadership of the firm in 1880 and still led the firm as D. X. Murphy & Brother at the time of the Nurses Home construction. The firm did considerable institutional work for Catholic clients, probably accounting for the Lincoln commission. Now titled "Lockett & Farley," the firm reportedly shares with one other firm the status of being the oldest continuously operating architecture firms in the U. S.<sup>2</sup> The firm's most widely recognized work is the spires of Churchill Downs racetrack, of 1895.

During the hospital's tenure on South Street, the Nurses Home gained a southeast addition in 1960. After the site was purchased by Lancaster County, the utilization of the campus was directed by the County Welfare Department led (since 1964) by J. Earle Trabert. He was a graduate of University of Nebraska and as a young man served a decade as superintendent of small school districts in southeast Nebraska. He sometimes also was the high school basketball coach, having been a member of the "Milford Eagles" state champion team of 1920.

*J. Earle Trabert*



<sup>1</sup>Lincoln Building permit 17812, July 28, 1928.

<sup>2</sup> "Lockett & Farley," Wikipedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lockett\\_%26\\_Farley](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lockett_%26_Farley) Accessed August 4, 2017.

That claim of primacy among extant American architectural firms (which are not wholly owned subsidiaries) is shared by SmithGroupJJR of Detroit, also established in 1853. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SmithGroupJJR>

Trabert worked for 27 years for the Nebraska Dept. of Welfare, then almost a decade for Lancaster County. In 1972, the County Board named the former Nurses Home “Trabert Hall” in his honor. Mr. Trabert retired from Lancaster County in 1973 and died in 1998 at 97 years of age.<sup>3</sup>



Trabert Hall served primarily as offices after its acquisition by the County. It is currently vacant, in preparation for sale.

## 8. SIGNIFICANCE

<u>Period</u>	<u>Areas of Significance-Check and justify</u>	
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> law
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> literature
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>architecture</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> military
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> music
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>1928-1969</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> science
	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>social/humanitarian (health care)</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> other-- Community Recreation
	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	

Specific dates: 1928, 1928-1969

<sup>3</sup> *Lincoln Star* Sept. 15, 1964, p. 8, Trabert’s appointment Lancaster County Welfare director.

*Lincoln Star* Dec. 20, 1973, p. 32, County Board honors Trabert by naming former Nurses Home “Trabert Hall.”

*Lincoln Star* Aug. 29, 1973, Trabert’s retirement from Lancaster County.

*Lincoln Journal Star* March 25, 1998, p. 4B, obituary.

Builder/Architect: Assenmacher/D. X. Murphy & Brother

Statement of Significance:

The former Nurses Home of Saint Elizabeth Hospital is indicative the scale of the original Saint Elizabeth Hospital complex and is the only original, freestanding structure of the complex still extant. (St. Francis Church was built as a chapel wing.) D. X. Murphy & Brother, architects of the building, were nationally significant practitioners and the Nurses Home is well-designed, of fine materials, and is the only identified example of their work in Nebraska.

9. STANDARDS FOR DESIGNATION

(Check one(s) that apply)

- ☒ Associated with events, person, or persons who have made a significant contribution to the history, heritage, or culture of the City of Lincoln, the County of Lancaster, the State of Nebraska, or the United States;
- ☒ Represents a distinctive architectural style or innovation, or is the work of a craftsman whose individual work is significant in the development of the City of Lincoln, the County of Lancaster, the State of Nebraska, or the United States; or
- ☐ Represents archeological values in that it yields or may be likely to yield information pertaining to pre-history or history.

10. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

*See Footnotes.*

11. FORM PREPARED BY:

Name/Title:	Ed Zimmer, Historic Preservation Planner	
Organization	Lincoln/Lanc. County Planning Dept.	Date Submitted August 4, 2017
Street & Number	555 S. 10 <sup>th</sup> St., Lincoln, NE 68508	Telephone (402)441-6360
City or Town	Lincoln	State NE 68508

Signature

FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION USE ONLY:

DATE LANDMARK/LANDMARK DISTRICT DESIGNATED

LANDMARK/LANDMARK DISTRICT NUMBER

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